



Local Allocation LA1 Marchmont Farm Hemel Hempstead

Draft Master Plan

October 2015



gleeson

Foreword

Six 'Local Allocations' (Green Belt sites identified for housing development and other associated uses) were identified in the Council's strategic plan, called the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy was adopted in September 2013. Further detail on these sites is provided in the Submission version of the Site Allocations document, which the Council will be submitting for independent examination in 2016 with a view to adoption thereafter.

The landowners, in partnership with the Council, have prepared draft master plans for each Local Allocation. These master plans add further detail to the site requirements set out in the Site Allocations document; providing further information on the design and layout of the sites. The Council sought feedback on these master plans at the same time as consulting on the Pre-submission Site Allocations document in late 2014.

Consultation on this site was carried out as part of preparation of the Council's Core Strategy (adopted September 2013) and through other consultation events, including those associated with the Pre-submission Site Allocations consultation in 2014. These responses, where appropriate, have been used to help prepare the master plans. Details of the public consultation is set out in the Local Allocations Master Plan Consultation Report.

It is intended that the master plans will be adopted by the Council at the same time as the final Site Allocations DPD. This is expected to be in late Summer/Autumn 2016.

If you have any further questions regarding any of the issues raised in this document please contact the Strategic Planning and Regeneration team on 01442 228660 or email strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk.

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This Master Plan has been prepared jointly by Dacorum Borough Council and Gleeson Developments Ltd, with assistance from Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design. It has the support of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).
- 1.2 Marchmont Farm is one of a number of sites where the principle of housing development has been established through Dacorum's Core Strategy. The emerging Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) will add detail about the development of the site. The Site Allocations DPD will also remove the site from the Green Belt and set a new Green Belt boundary.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Master Plan is to supplement the Site Allocations DPD by setting development principles and a framework through which a high quality residential scheme can be delivered on the site. It is also intended to demonstrate how the planning requirements set out in the Site Allocations DPD can be delivered and will guide future planning applications. The Master Plan has been prepared:
 - To explain new settlement and Green Belt boundaries;
 - To outline requirements for the planning and delivery of the area;
 - To outline layout possibilities;
 - To facilitate discussion of the above with the public;
 - To provide justification for the planning requirements; and
 - To guide future planning application(s).
- 1.4 The Master Plan has been prepared in consultation with, and contribution from, key stakeholders. These stakeholders include the Local Highway Authority, Thames Water, Hertfordshire Constabulary, the Environment Agency, Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Forum, the Gypsy and Traveller Unit at the County Council and Hertfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment (GATE).
- 1.5 Discussion with local residents during production of the Master Plan has helped to understand local aspirations and concerns for development on the site. The input of stakeholders and residents has helped to shape the contents of the Master Plan and the development principles contained within it.
- 1.6 There are three main landowners of the site, comprising the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Gleeson Developments Ltd, and Dacorum Borough Council. The Council also own and manage Margaret Lloyd Park, which is adjacent to the site and will be extended as part of the plans. The extent of the area covered by this Master Plan is shown in Figure 1.
- 1.7 The final master plan will be adopted by the Council as supplementary guidance. Whilst planning applications on the site will be considered against Development Plan policies, this document provides further detail pursuant to those policies and has been the subject of public consultation. As such, it will carry weight as a material consideration, when planning applications are determined.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan - Local Allocation LA1 Marchmont Farm, Hemel Hempstead



2. Context

Planning Policy

- 2.1 The following section sets out the planning policy context within which the Master Plan has been prepared, and which will in turn inform future planning application(s) on the site. This includes existing national planning policy, saved policies from Dacorum Borough Local Plan (1991 – 2011), the recently adopted Core Strategy, and the emerging Site Allocations DPD.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) adopted in 2012 represents the planning policy consideration at the national level. It supersedes all previous national Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements. The Council's Core Strategy was prepared in the context of the NPPF and is compliant with it.

Core Strategy

- 2.3 Dacorum Borough Council's Core Strategy was adopted on 25th September 2013 and contains the main strategic policies which will guide development in the borough.
- 2.4 Marchmont Farm is designated as a Local Allocation within the Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy in the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy states that Hemel Hempstead will accommodate up to 8,800 new homes up to 2031. These will be spread across the town, with the largest sites being in the town centre, East Hemel Hempstead and the Allocations at West Hemel Hempstead (LA3), the Old Town (LA2) and Marchmont Farm (LA1). The table below summarises key principles for the development:

Core Strategy Extract:

Location reference	LA1
Site location	Marchmont Farm
Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Around 300 new homes• Extend Margaret Lloyd Park
Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A mix of two storey and three storey housing including around 40% affordable homes.• A contribution must be made towards educational and community facilities.• The layout, design, density and landscaping must create a soft edge with the adjoining Green Belt boundary.• New strategic landscaping to mitigate impact of new development on the Gade Valley and help ensure its separation from Piccotts End.• Impact on the local road network mitigated through the promotion of sustainable travel options, including pedestrian links to the local centre.

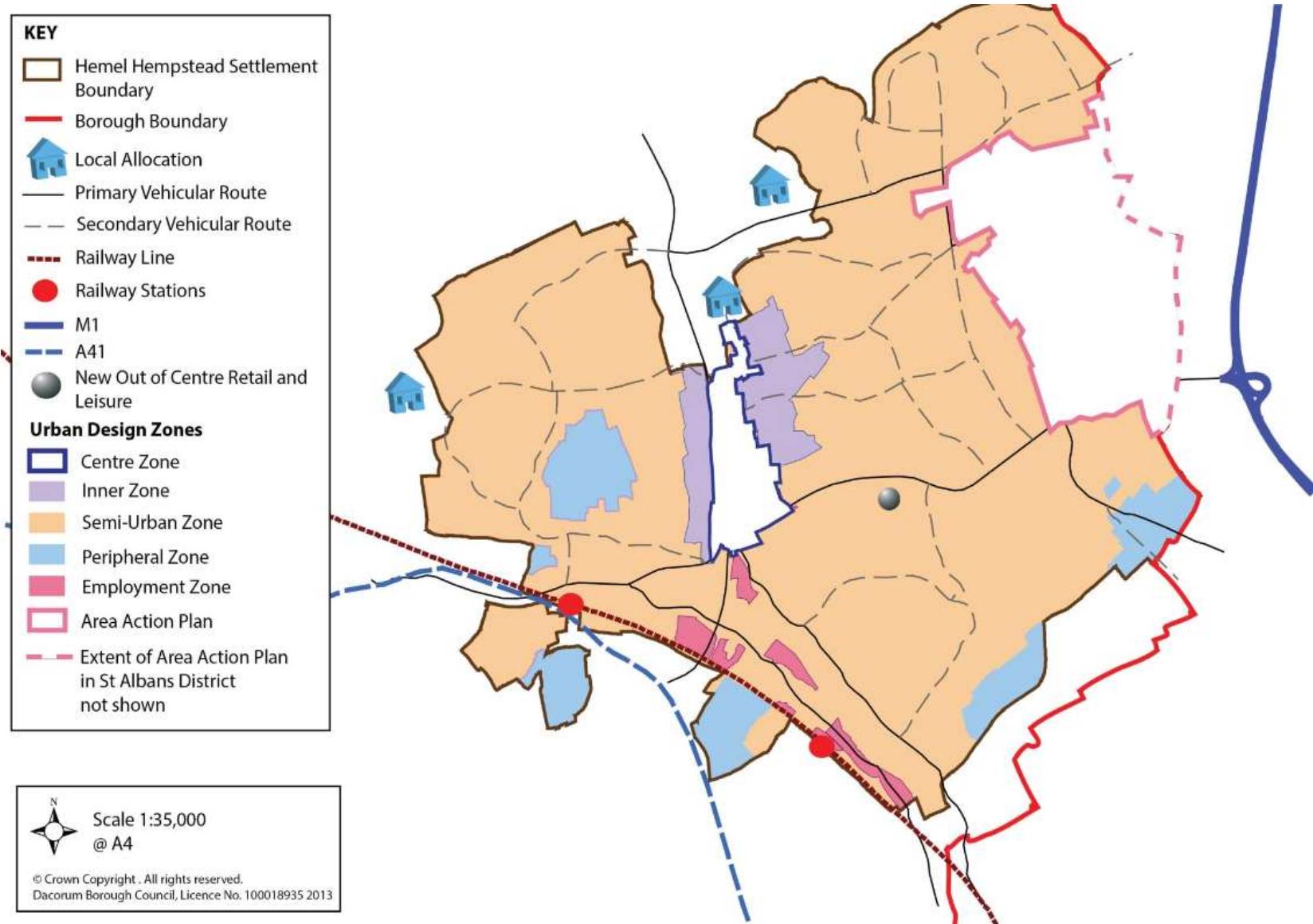
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal will be delivered as an allocation in the Site Allocations DPD where detailed planning requirements will be established.
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2.5 In addition, the following policies from the Core Strategy (2006-2031) are the most relevant for the development at Marchmont Farm site:

- Policy CS1: Distribution of Development
- Policy CS3: Managing Selected Development Sites
- Policy CS4: The Towns and Large Villages
- Policy CS8: Sustainable Transport
- Policy CS9: Management of Roads
- Policy CS10: Quality of Settlement Design
- Policy CS11: Quality of Neighbourhood Design
- Policy CS12: Quality of Site Design
- Policy CS13: Quality of the Public Realm
- Policy CS18: Mix of Housing
- Policy CS19: Affordable Housing
- Policy CS23: Social Infrastructure
- Policy CS25: Landscape Character
- Policy CS26: Green Infrastructure
- Policy CS27: Quality of the Historic Environment
- Policy CS28: Carbon Emission Reductions
- Policy CS29: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy CS35: Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

2.6 Policy CS5: Green Belt will apply until the site is formally removed from the Green Belt (i.e. until the Site Allocations DPD is formally adopted).

Figure 2: Extract from Core Strategy – Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy Vision Diagram: Built



Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011

- 2.7 Although the Core Strategy has been adopted, some of the Local Plan policies are still 'saved' (i.e. they remain operational). These saved policies will gradually be superseded as the Council produces further DPDs and supplementary guidance.
- 2.8 The following saved Local Plan policies are particularly relevant to the development of Marchmont Farm:
- Policy 12: Infrastructure Provision and Phasing (partly superseded by Core Strategy Policy CS35)
 - Policy 13: Planning Conditions and Planning Obligations
 - Policy 18: The Size of New Dwellings
 - Policy 21: Density of Residential Development
 - Policy 51: Development and Transport Impacts
 - Policy 54: Highway Design
 - Policy 57: Provision and Management of Parking
 - Policy 111: Height of Buildings
 - Policy 113: Exterior Lighting
 - Policy 129: Storage and Recycling of Waste on Development Sites
- 2.9 Some elements of the appendices to the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 have been superseded by the Core Strategy policies. However, for simplicity they are retained in their entirety, until updated and superseded by subsequent DPDs or decisions.
- 2.10 The following Local Plan appendices are particularly relevant to the development of Marchmont Farm:
- Appendix 3: Layout and Design of Residential Areas
 - Appendix 5: Parking Provision
 - Appendix 6: Open Space and Play Provision
 - Appendix 8: Exterior Lighting
- 2.11 The Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs will take precedence where there is any conflict in content.

Supplementary guidance

- 2.12 The Council has adopted a number of documents to supplement Local Plan and Core Strategy policies. These documents are used as material planning considerations in deciding planning applications. Where there is a conflict between their content and that of a DPD, the DPD will take precedence. The main documents relevant to the development of Marchmont Farm are as follows:

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- Accessibility Zones for the Application of Car Parking Standards – now incorporated into the Area Based Policies SPG (2004).

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and other advice

- Affordable Housing (2013)
- Sustainable Design and Construction Advice Note (2015)

Site Allocations

- 2.13 The Site Allocations DPD includes a policy for Marchmont Farm, together with a vision, an indicative layout and a series of development principles. These are reflected and elaborated on by this Master Plan.
- 2.14 Where there is any conflict between the requirements of this Master Plan and the Site Allocations DPD, the Site Allocations DPD will take precedence.
- 2.15 Comments received during consultation on the Pre-submission Site Allocations and draft master plan documents have been considered by the Council and, where appropriate, changes made. A further ‘focused changes’ consultation was conducted from 12th August to 23rd September 2015 to establish views on these proposed changes to the Site Allocations document. Thereafter the Site Allocations DPD will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for public examination and if found sound the Marchmont Farm Master Plan will be adopted alongside the Site Allocations DPD.

Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.16 Grovehill Future is a Neighbourhood Forum which was formed in early 2014 and they are currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for Grovehill. The Plan area will include the Local Allocation at Marchmont Farm. Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan’s ‘Issues and Options’ stage was completed in September 2014 and work continues on drafting the final plan for submission.
- 2.17 The Neighbourhood Forum has been consulted at various stages of the Master Plan preparation and comments were provided on concepts and principles for the new development. Grovehill Future will have an influence on how funds from the contributions made through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) are used to support the development of Grovehill. Once the Neighbourhood Plan is ‘made’, a greater proportion of CIL funds from developments in Grovehill will be used specifically to support the infrastructure of the area.

Community Engagement

- 2.18 Throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs, the Council has engaged with the local community to obtain their views on, and aspirations for, this site. This engagement has helped develop and refine the development principles highlighted in this master plan. For further information please see the relevant reports of representation and consultation on the Council’s website.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 2.19 Dacorum Borough Council adopted its Charging Schedule and supporting documents and policies¹ on 25th February 2015, and thereafter implemented the charge on 1st July 2015. The Charging Schedule requires new residential and large retail developments to contribute to infrastructure via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It is expected that some of the infrastructure required to support development of Marchmont Farm will be secured through CIL, with a limited number of contributions secured through the S106 mechanism (see section 7 for further information).

Location and Surrounding Area

- 2.20 There is evidence of settlement at Hemel Hempstead from Roman times in the form of early Roman villas and burial grounds. The next significant phase of development for the town occurred during the 17th and 18th centuries when due to its location along the shortest route between London and the industrial Midlands, the settlement grew into a small market town. The town's largest period of growth was in the 1950s when it was developed as a New Town. Today Hemel Hempstead's population stands at approximately 82,000 inhabitants.

Grovehill

- 2.21 The Grovehill area was the second neighbourhood of the New Town development of Hemel Hempstead. The two phased development was completed in the early 1970s and comprised largely of residential development with large open spaces incorporated into the area.
- 2.22 Henry Wells Square provides the 'heart' of the Grovehill neighbourhood and provides local amenities including a supermarket, a chemist, a post office and a medical and dental surgery. Further facilities and services are located in Hemel Hempstead town centre and Two Waters and Apsley to the south of the area.
- 2.23 The site is also close to the hamlet of Piccotts End and the Old Town of Hemel Hempstead, both of which are designated as Conservation Areas.

Marchmont Farm

- 2.24 Marchmont Farm is currently in agricultural use (both pastoral and arable) and lies adjacent to the northern edge of the settlement boundary along Link Road (A4147). To the north east of the site lies the existing Grovehill residential development, to the south is Link Road beyond which lies a parcel of woodland and a housing estate beyond. To the west agricultural land with a western boundary edged by dwellings in Piccotts End.
- 2.25 The site lies approximately 1.5 miles north east of the Hemel Hempstead town centre, three miles north of Hemel Hempstead railway station and three miles north-west of junction 8 on the M1. There are five schools within a mile of the

¹ The supporting policies are the Regulation 123 List, Exceptional Circumstances Relief, Discretionary Charity Relief, and Instalments and Payments in Kind policies

site, the closest (Aycliffe Drive Primary School, Pre-School and Nursery) being half a mile way. The closest secondary school is The Astley Cooper Secondary School. There is a parade of local shops at Henry Wells Square also half a mile east of the site located in Grovehill.

Figure 3: Site in the Context of Hemel Hempstead

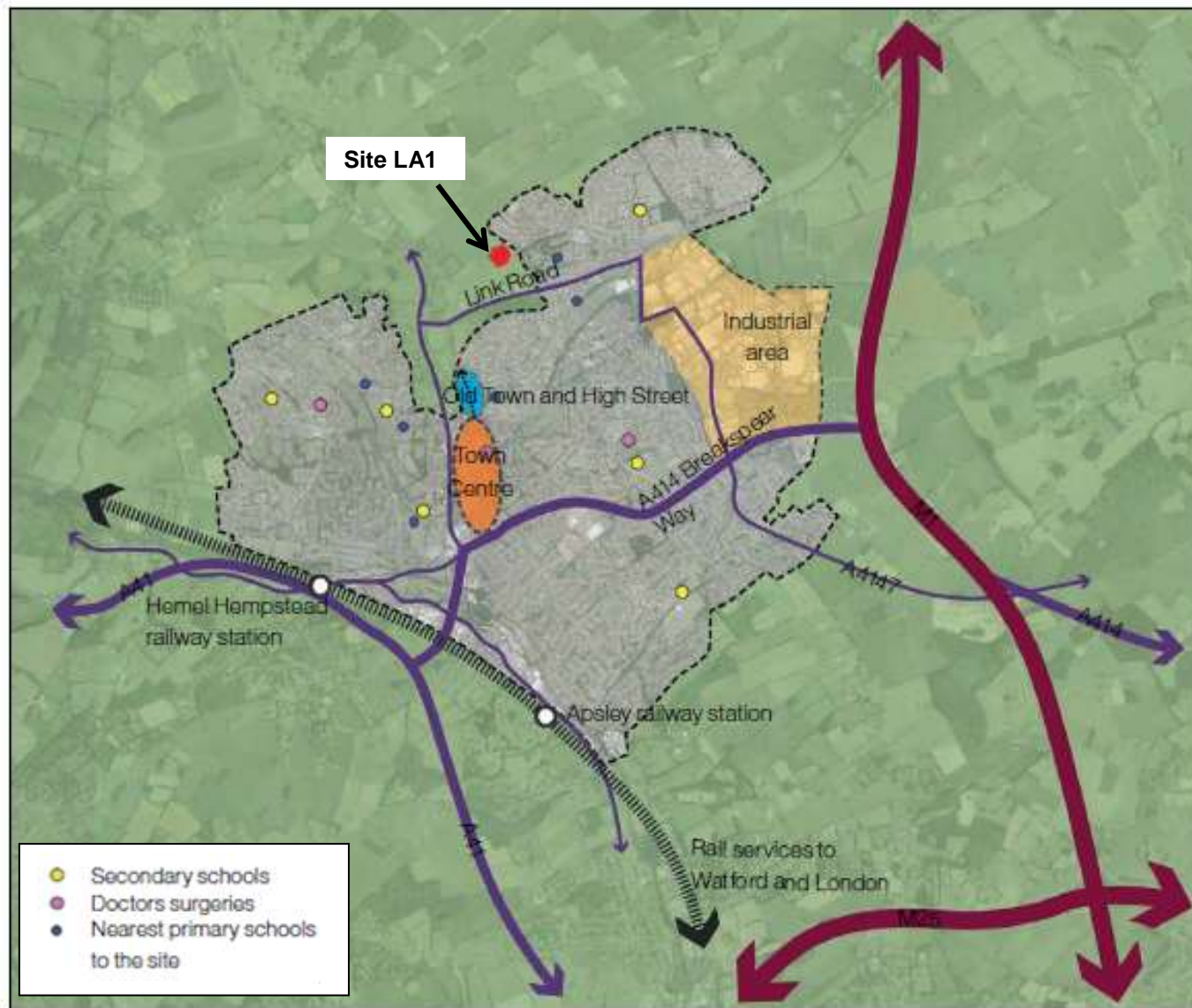
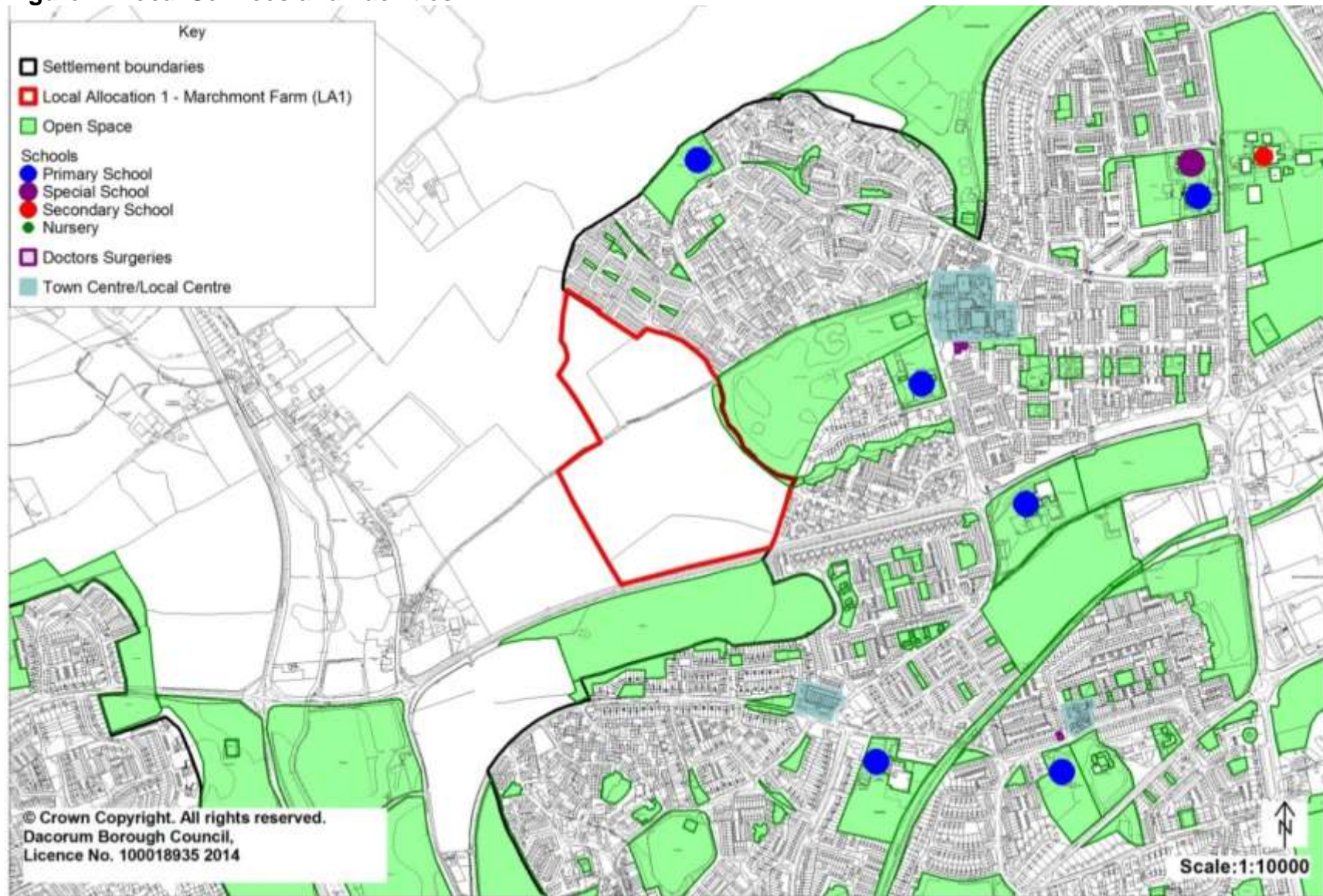


Figure 4: Local Services and Facilities



Proposal

- 2.26 The development will involve the construction of between 300 and 350 homes, accompanied by open space, sustainable transport provisions and green links. The number of units assumed for the site within the Site Allocations DPD is slightly higher than originally in the Core Strategy (which specified 'around 300'). This is a result of further testing of site capacity through the Master Plan and Site Allocations processes.
- 2.27 The development will also secure 40% of the units as affordable housing (through a Section 106 agreement) and make other contributions towards on and off-site infrastructure as required (see section 7).

3. Analysis of the site

3.1 This section of the masterplan sets out a site analysis of Marchmont Farm and covers the following:

- Archaeology and Heritage Assets;
- Ecology and Trees;
- Landscape and Topography;
- Flood Risk and Drainage;
- Highways and Access; and
- Infrastructure, Services and Utilities.

3.2 This information has been used to inform the development principles and indicative layout plan in section 6.

Archaeology and Heritage Assets

3.3 A desk based archaeological assessment was undertaken of the site by CgMs in October 2004. The study did not identify any statutorily protected sites within the assessed area.

3.4 The report concluded that there is a low potential for evidence on site dating to the Prehistoric, Saxon/early Medieval or Medieval periods. However there is a moderate potential for the presence of stray finds dating to the Roman period. It concluded that no overriding archaeological constraints are identified which will prevent the allocation of the site for housing.

3.5 In August 2013 a preliminary targeted field evaluation was undertaken of the site. No significant archaeological features or artefacts were present in the trenches and no features which could be related to geophysical anomalies were found. The natural soil sequence was recorded in all the trenches and no modern disturbance was observed. The Historic Environment Advisor at the County Council has advised that further limited archaeological field evaluation should be undertaken to inform the detailed design of the site (i.e. at the planning application stage), to determine what, if any, mitigation is required.

3.6 The nearby hamlet of Piccotts End is designated as a Conservation Area and, taking account of the local topography, Marchmont Farm sits within the wider setting of this designated heritage asset. Development of the site will therefore need to consider form, layout and design to ensure the proposal does not have a negative impact on the setting of this Conservation Area. A Heritage Statement should be prepared and submitted with any planning application to identify any impacts and appropriate mitigation and to inform detailed design of the site.

Ecology and Trees

3.7 A Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site was undertaken by LDA Design in October 2004 and this found one statutory environmental designation within 2km of the site – Howe Grove Wood Local Nature Reserve (LNR). This is dense, ancient

semi-natural coppiced woodland² at the urban fringe which runs alongside part of the southern extent of the A4147 Link Road. This woodland is also recorded on the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

- 3.8 The survey also identified 12 non-statutory County Wildlife Sites within 2 km of the site, although it is not anticipated that the development will have any significant impact upon these. An updated survey conducted in July 2012 by LDA Design found no material changes from the previous study. Given the time that will elapse between adoption of the Master Plan and preparation of a planning application to deliver homes after 2021, an updated Phase 1 Habitat Survey will be necessary to inform the detailed design of the development.
- 3.9 The majority of the site is improved grassland, with some areas of semi improved grassland to the north and east. In terms of species richness, these are only of local importance and therefore can be retained in situ.
- 3.10 A number of protected species were identified as either being present at the site, including a badger sett that has been recorded on site, or as having the potential to be present at the site. Relevant protected species surveys will therefore have to be undertaken in order to inform design of the development and in preparation of the planning application. These surveys should determine the use of the site by these protected species (including badgers, birds, reptiles and bats) and recommend appropriate mitigation measures to ensure there are no detrimental impacts upon these species.
- 3.11 It is recommended that any existing ecological corridors (including trees and hedgerows) through and around the site to Howe Grove Wood LNR, Margaret Lloyd Park and the wider countryside are retained. The retention of existing trees and hedgerows should be informed by an arboricultural survey and tree report, hedgerow survey as well as the aforementioned updated Phase 1 Habitat Survey, which should include a subsequent Phase 2 vegetation survey³.
- 3.12 Further context to the on-site surveys is provided in the document *Hertfordshire's Ecological Networks*⁴ which will need to be considered in preparing proposals for the site. This will help ensure that the development seeks to protect and enhance the integrity of wider ecological networks and achieve biodiversity gains where possible, in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF.

Landscape and Topography

- 3.13 A detailed landscape assessment for Marchmont Farm was undertaken by LDA Design in November 2004 and updated in June 2012. The reports conclude that

² An Ancient Semi-natural Woodland is defined as 'ancient woodland sites that have retained the native tree and shrub cover that has not been planted, although it may have been managed by coppicing or felling and allowed to regenerate naturally.' (Source: http://www.gis.naturalengland.org.uk/pubs/gis/tech_aw.htm)

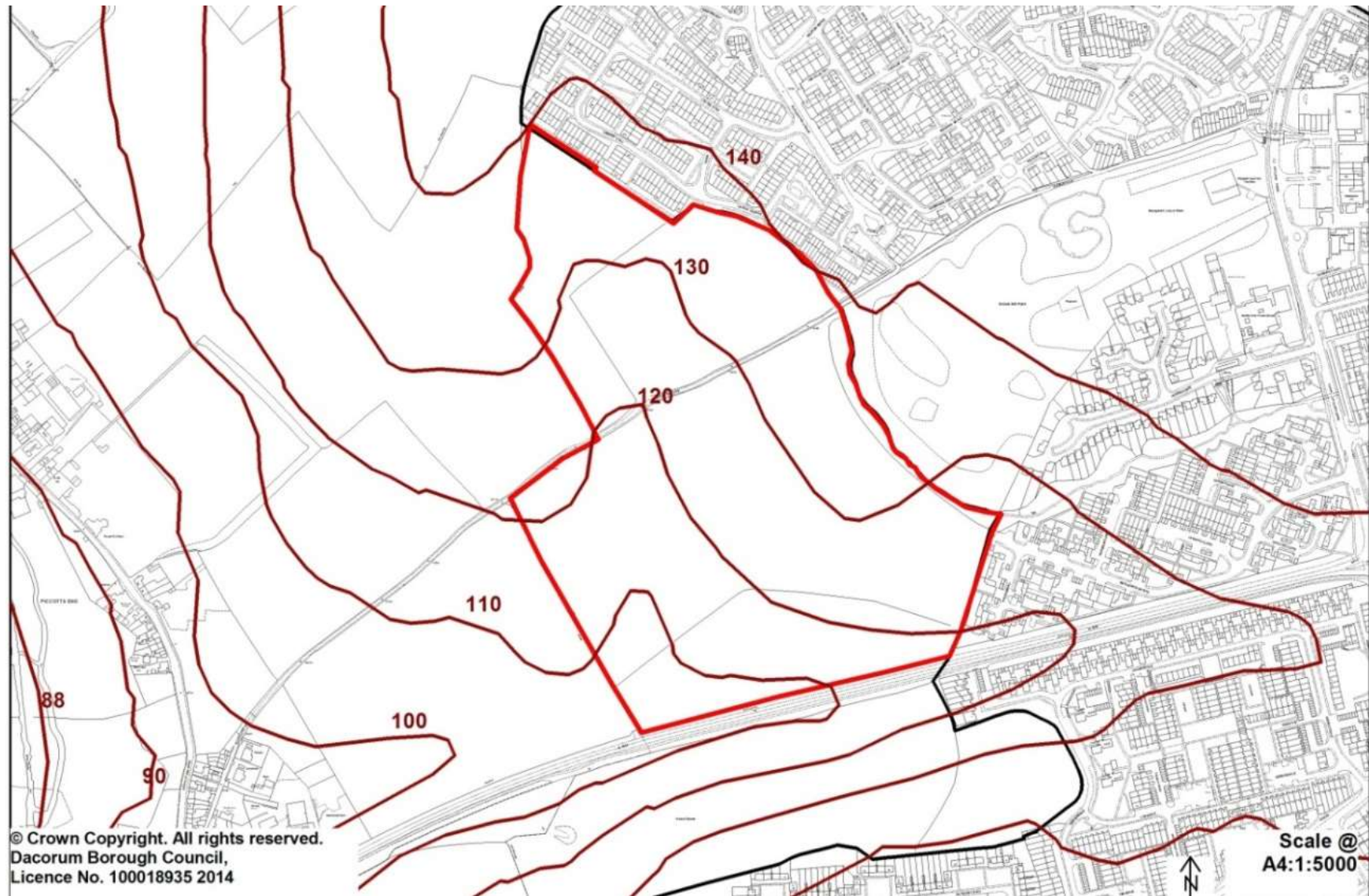
³ As recommended by the updated Phase 1 Habitat Survey conducted by LDA Design in 2012.

⁴ Prepared by Hertfordshire Local Partnership, Herts Environmental Records Centre and Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

despite the changes to landscape character and to the landscape and visual context of the site, there is still capacity to accommodate additional development.

- 3.14 The site forms part of a wider landscape tract (High Gade Valley) which is referred to as Area 123 in the Dacorum Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) SPG (May 2004). This area is characterised as a steep-sided v-shaped valley allowing the River Gade to meander through the landscape which includes grazing meadows, floodplain and wetland vegetation, ancient settlements and traces of scrub and woodland. Marchmont Farm is located in the southern tip of this character area and the LCA recommends that the area is conserved and strengthened. In doing so, it specifically states that new planting should be encouraged to maintain age diversity and respect the historic context of existing features.
- 3.15 Efforts should be taken to conserve and strengthen the landscape character. The site is screened on some edges and is elevated in places. If the development follows the requirements of the Master Plan, the site is capable of being integrated into the overall landscape character of the area and maintaining an appropriate landscape buffer between the site and Piccotts End. The site boundary has been appropriately defined within the Site Allocations DPD in order for the development at Marchmont Farm to nestle into the landscape, behind the ridge line as shown on the Site Topography in Figure 5.

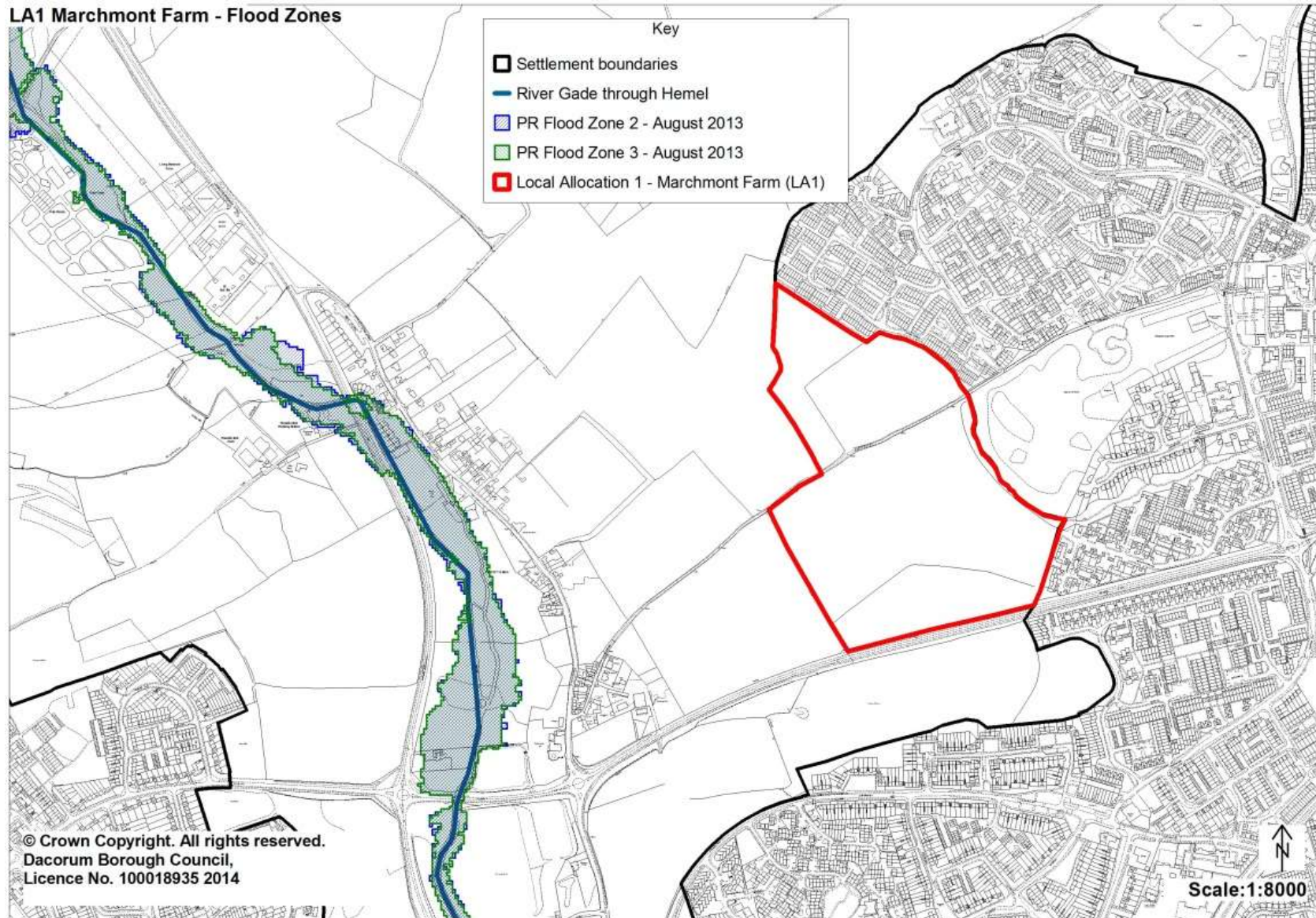
Figure 5: Site Topography



Flood Risk and Drainage

- 3.16 The site falls within Flood Zone 1 in respect of fluvial flood risk as designated by the Environment Agency. The closest areas within Flood Zone 2 or 3 centres on the River Gade, adjacent to the western boundary of Piccotts End Road, which is located 0.5 miles from the site. However this is unlikely to have an impact on development at the site due to the topography of the land. Part of the site does, however, fall within an area at risk of surface water flooding. This coincides with the western boundary of the Local Allocation site, part of Piccotts End Lane (eastern extent) and an area along the Link Road.
- 3.17 The Environment Agency has advised that the site lies within a Source Protection Zone 3 (SPZ3). Any development proposal will need to ensure that further groundwater contamination does not occur as a result of this development. Any infiltration drainage techniques will need to be carefully considered.

Figure 6: Site in Relation to Designated Fluvial Flood Zones



Highways and Access

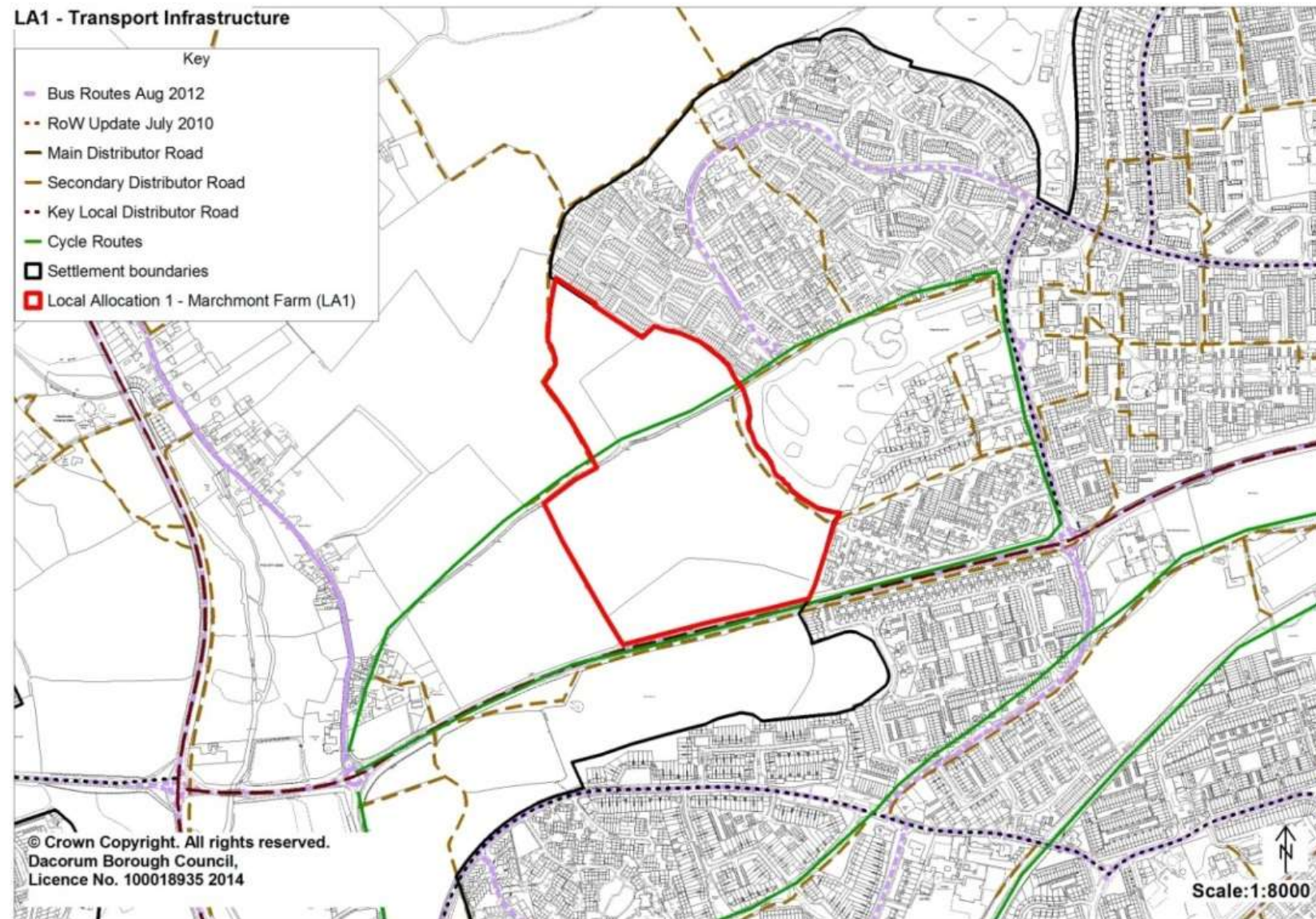
- 3.18 There has been a high level of traffic modelling undertaken for the whole of Hemel Hempstead, taking into account the quantum of new development in and around the town as proposed in the Core Strategy and detailed further within the Site Allocations document. Initially carried out in 2013, the modelling work was updated in March 2015 which found no material change in circumstances since 2013. Therefore the Local Highway Authority advised that there are no significant issues that cannot be resolved through off-site highway improvement works. Specific transport proposals are also included in the Site Allocations DPD to address the management of the roads and sustainable transport measures.
- 3.19 In addition, a more detailed traffic study⁵ (completed in November 2014) has been prepared to consider the Local Allocation site itself. Following an appraisal of the site, it concludes that the proposed development of 350 homes could be accommodated within the local traffic and transportation network and that the only viable location for the main vehicular access will be onto the A4147 Link Road subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures as set out within this Master Plan.
- 3.20 The option of a priority junction access or roundabout onto Link Road (A4147) has also been assessed. The access point will have capacity for the proposed number of residential units. Provisions for pedestrians and cyclists to reach existing routes will be required across the Link Road. Piccotts End Lane runs through the site and provides a connection for pedestrians and cyclists to Piccotts End to the west and Henry Wells Square and bus services to the east in Grovehill. The existing road networks should be well integrated into the new road layout and roads within the site should be designed in accordance with the principles of the Manual for Streets Design guides⁶ and other relevant guidance⁷.
- 3.21 There will also be a need for a new bus stop to serve the new development. The existing bus stops are located in adjoining residential areas. The highway authority requires all new residential development to be within 400m walking distance of a bus stop.

⁵ Vectos, Marchmont Farm, Hemel Hempstead: Transport Strategy (November 2014).

⁶ Department for Transport, Manual for Streets (2007) and Manual for Streets 2 (2010) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets>).

⁷ Highways England, The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (2012, updated 2015) (<https://www.gov.uk/standards-for-highways-online-resources#history>).

Figure 7: Existing Transport Infrastructure



Infrastructure, Services and Utilities

3.22 A utilities assessment has confirmed that no utility services or infrastructure cross the site (above or below ground) but a range of service connections exist close to the site boundary.

- *Electricity:* There is no EDF cabling within the site. There is an existing high voltage cable in the Link Road to the south of the site as well as a low voltage cable in the residential roads in Grovehill. However there appear to be no significant issues involved in establishing an electricity supply to the site.
- *Gas:* There are no Transco mains or associated apparatus within the site. However there is a low pressure main to the east of the site and a low pressure main in the carriageway of Marlborough Rise. Gas connections can be provided to the site.
- *Water:* Thames Water and Veolia have water mains and associated apparatus on the boundary of the site. Foul and surface water sewers run along the southern and eastern boundaries of the site.
- *Telecommunications:* There are no BT mains or apparatus within the site however, there are to the south of the site. An underground network exists in the east side of Grovehill. However this is not envisaged as a constraint to development.

Foul Drainage: Thames Water has indicated that new or upgraded drainage infrastructure is likely to be required to ensure there is sufficient capacity within the waste water network ahead of the development (see section 7 regarding delivery). Further studies will be necessary to identify capacity constraints within these existing networks and it is expected that a Drainage Strategy should be prepared by the developer to determine the exact impact and significance of infrastructure required to support the development.

- *Local Services:* The Infrastructure Delivery Plan highlights that there is scope for the development at Marchmont Farm to contribute towards improving services and facilities. It was not considered that the development could support on-site provision of education, retail and community facilities, and there is an overall emphasis on supporting the services and facilities in Henry Wells Square and generally in Grovehill.

4. Development Constraints and Opportunities

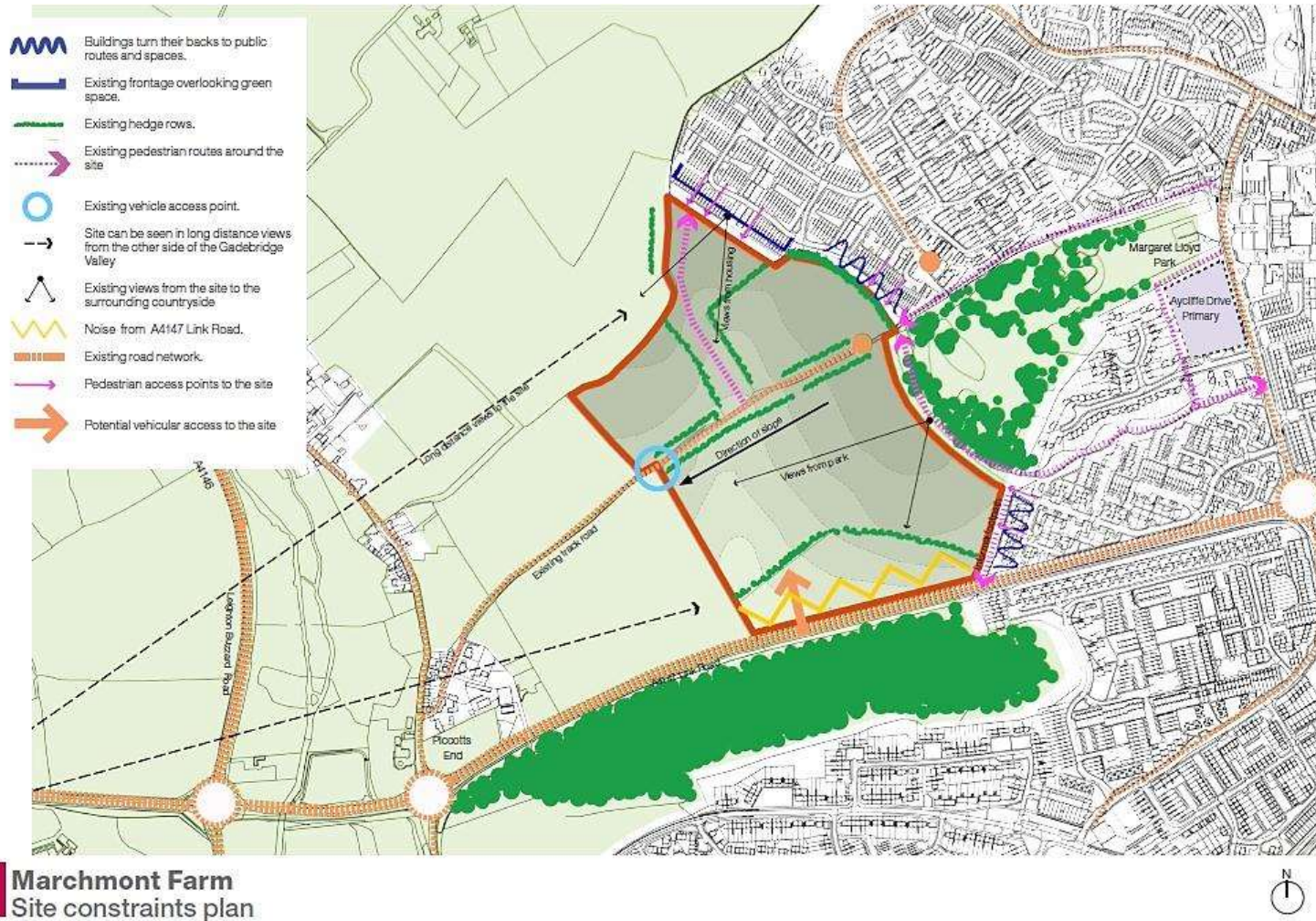
- 4.1 Marchmont Farm presents an opportunity to deliver between 300 and 350 homes and help support the regeneration of the Local Centre at Henry Wells Square, Grovehill.
- 4.2 The site is relatively unconstrained in comparison with other large development sites. However there are some characteristics that have influenced the content of this Master Plan and will need to be taken into account when considering future planning applications.
- 4.3 These constraints and opportunities are highlighted in Figure 8.

Constraints

- The land form and slopes as it affects:
 - a. Surface water run-off and drainage; and
 - b. The visual impact of new development in the Gade Valley;
- The existing road network, particularly:
 - a. The character of roads on the edge of Grovehill; and
 - b. The impact of new access points on the Link Road;
- The main hedgerows and wildlife corridors, including:
 - a. Links to Howe Grove Local Nature Reserve; and
 - b. The character and use of Piccotts End Lane.

Figure 8: Site Constraints and Opportunities (extract from the Statement of Common Ground, August 2012)

Landscape Objectives



4.3 A clear landscape (and green infrastructure) strategy is an important element of the Master Plan for this site. The following landscape objectives will be used to guide the site layout and design and should be incorporated into a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which will inform detailed design of the proposal ahead of submitting a planning application.

Landscape objective 1: Establish a permanent defensible Green Belt boundary that is appropriately “soft” and separates the Green Belt from the new edge of Hemel Hempstead



High Wood – an example of significant landscaping between fields and Woodhall area

Landscape objective 2: Use native species and follow the pattern of existing fields to create this boundary



Existing landscape along northern boundary of the site.

Landscape objective 3: Retain views to Piccotts End from Grovehill along the A4147



View from east end of Link Road towards Piccotts End, with Marchmont Farm site to the right.

Landscape objective 4: Retain open land on the prominent ridgeline shoulder (spur) of the site and plant new trees here



View from the lowest part of the site next to Link Road, looking north eastwards

Landscape objective 5: Respect the site's topography by aligning development with existing contours and by careful siting of new planting, e.g. to retain views to Grovehill Wood (in Margaret Lloyd Park)



View from the highest point of the site, with Margaret Lloyd park to the left and Howe Grove to the right

Landscape objective 6: Retain the integrity of Piccotts End Lane by avoiding unnecessary crossing points, by protecting hedgerow trees along the lane and through new planting



View across the site along Piccotts End Lane with Margaret Lloyd Park in the distance

Landscape objective 7: Ensure careful planning of the interface of the development with existing development and open space



View across the existing boundary of Grovehill West with Margaret Lloyd Park

Landscape objective 8: Use (and extend) the existing hedgerow pattern as a basis for establishing compartments for development



Looking south towards Howe Grove, showing distinctive field patterns with hedgerows

Landscape objective 9: Maintain open space and habitat links between Grovehill and the wider farmland landscape, including Howe Grove Wood LNR



View from northern corner of the site, looking north

5. Master Plan Requirements

- 5.1 This Master Plan sets out a framework for the form that the new development will take. It includes the key requirements for when the detailed plans are drawn up as part of the subsequent planning application for the site. The challenge is to create a place that complements and enhances the Grovehill neighbourhood and fits into the landscape.

Vision

- 5.2 The following vision has been established for the Marchmont Farm site. It sets out how the development will look and relate to the wider town and countryside beyond.

Vision

The new part of Grovehill will be an attractive place in its own right. Its character and appearance will complement and enhance Grovehill. The development will be integrated with the rest of Grovehill through the use of the local centre and other shared services, facilities and open space. Pedestrian and cycle routes will permeate the neighbourhood.

The new area will be an inclusive community, designed to be safe and secure. There will be a mix of homes, accommodating both smaller households and family homes. Development will be spacious and will allow views of the countryside in the Gade valley. Open space will permeate the neighbourhood, providing links between Margaret Lloyd Park, Howe Grove Wood and the wider countryside.

Development Principles

- 5.3 A series of development principles have been established for this site. These must be followed when drawing up the detailed planning application for this site. They will also be used by the Council as a basis upon which to assess this application.
- 5.4 For this site the Development Principles are grouped into the following sub-headings:
- Homes;
 - Design;
 - Green Space;
 - Landscape;
 - Infrastructure, Services and Utilities; and
 - Highways and Access.

Homes

Homes Principles

- **Accommodate between 300 and 350 homes.**
- **Deliver a mix of housing including 40% affordable homes.**
- **Provide for family homes and larger, more spacious properties within a range a provision.**
- **Incorporate 5 pitches for gypsies and travellers at the site with good access to the primary road network.**

- 5.5 The site has been identified to deliver between 300 and 350 new homes, as part of an extension to the existing Grovehill neighbourhood.
- 5.6 40% of the total homes will be affordable. This should comprise 75% rented and 25% shared ownership or other forms of intermediate housing (excluding shared equity housing). All affordable homes will be provided as a mix of sizes and types (flats and dwellings) to reflect local needs. At present there is an equal need for 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms.
- 5.7 Accommodation to provide supported housing and independent living (e.g. for the elderly and people with learning, physical and mental disabilities) may contribute towards the affordable housing element of the proposal either for social/affordable rent or shared ownership.
- 5.8 The Council expects affordable housing to be indistinguishable from market housing in terms of design, and to be dispersed across the site. They should be designed to the Homes and Community Agency design and sustainability standards (<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/design-and-sustainability-standards>) or their equivalent. The Council will work with Registered Providers to ensure, where feasible, a proportion of homes are delivered to meet lifetime homes standards.
- 5.9 The detailed mix of tenure and type of housing will be informed by the latest advice and technical work set out in the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (www.dacorum.gov.uk/ahspd), and the most up to date local housing needs information. Early liaison with a Registered Provider and the Council's Strategic Housing team is essential.
- 5.10 A gypsy and traveller needs assessment was completed in January 2013 together with Three Rivers District Council. There is a need to provide homes for gypsies and travellers, and Marchmont Farm is an acceptable location in planning policy terms, provided that certain criteria are met. Together with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS22 and relevant Government guidance, the site must be: separated from existing residential areas; small-scale; and designed to a high standard with an open frontage similar to other forms of housing.
- 5.11 The site will be designed to accommodate 5 pitches. It will have easy access from the Link Road, and be designed to have mature screening for the privacy

and amenity of residents. The site should be designed in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government design guidance or any replacement advice (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11439/designinggypsites.pdf).

Design

Design Principles

- **Secure high quality architectural design.**
- **Limit buildings to two storeys, except where a higher element would create interest and focal points in the street scene and is appropriate in terms of topography and visual impact.**
- **Use traditional materials where feasible.**
- **Ensure sufficient, well-located parking.**
- **Arrange buildings and routes to achieve natural surveillance, good pedestrian access to facilities and an attractive relationship to open spaces.**
- **Secure the best possible sustainability standards in design and construction.**

- 5.12 The new housing development will be immediately adjacent to Grovehill. Whilst a close relationship to adjacent areas is an important aspect of the Master Plan, the new housing should exhibit its own character and design.
- 5.13 The site is located in close proximity to the Piccotts End Conservation Area. The road and the main built form of the conservation area run north to south, and is separated from Marchmont Farm by open green fields. The topography is noticeable here, with the conservation area sitting at a much lower level than the site. Although much of the housing development will not be visible from Piccotts End Road, the new housing will be closely linked via the Link Road and Piccotts End Lane. Use of traditional styles, materials and layout should be used to reflect the style of the conservation area.
- 5.14 The issue of the development's visibility should be mitigated by careful siting of taller buildings and prominent roof forms to parts of the site that are more discreet, such as those at lower levels. The level of street lighting will be appropriate for a semi-rural location, and the type will be in line with the standards of the Highway Authority, who are increasingly moving towards improved technology.
- 5.15 Development will be required to comply with the highest standards of sustainable design and construction. The requirements on principles of sustainability are contained in Policies CS28, CS29 and CS30, and Table 10 of the Core Strategy, relating to reducing carbon dioxide emissions, energy and water efficiency, and other factors of environmental sustainability. Developers will be expected to complete a Sustainability Statement and carbon compliance check in support of

the development. Further advice on how to meet the requirements can be seen in the Core Strategy and Hertfordshire's Building Futures Design Guide.

Green Space

Green Space Principles

- **Meet Council standards for all types of open space as a basic aim.**
- **Design and manage the open space for clear, identifiable purposes.**
- **Arrange the open space to ensure a pleasant, coherent and wildlife friendly network linking to Hunting Gate Wood and Howe Grove Wood.**
- **Extend Margaret Lloyd Park**

- 5.16 Margaret Lloyd Park to the south of Grovehill will be extended into the site. The existing park is substantial, with open space, mature and significant trees and vegetation, and a play area to the Aycliffe Road frontage. The development will provide a new play area (referred to as a LEAP or 'Locally Equipped Area of Play'), which is expected to be within the extension to the park, adjacent to the new homes.
- 5.17 The rights of way through and around the site should be retained and integrated into the housing development. There should be minimal crossings of Piccotts End Lane to preserve habitat potential and landscaping. Green links should also be created between the countryside, Margaret Lloyd Park and Howe Grove Wood.

Landscape

Landscape Principles

- **Soften views of housing from the countryside by use of planting, by retaining appropriate hedgerows and by siting open space carefully (particularly taking account of views from Howe Grove Wood and across the Gade valley).**
- **Provide a soft edge to the countryside and ensure visual and physical separation from Piccotts End.**
- **Provide pleasant footpath and cycle access through the site to link with the surrounding countryside.**

- 5.18 As set out earlier, development of this site should accord with the landscape objectives identified in Chapter 4 of this Master Plan. As set out in Objective 1, a buffer should be provided between the new housing and the countryside, in a similar way to the boundary around the nearby Woodhall area of Grovehill. Additionally, the development will incorporate landscaping along the edges of

each block of housing, and existing hedgerows will be retained wherever possible. The hedgerow corridor along Piccotts End Lane will help to maintain the views across the valley, from Margaret Lloyd Park and Piccotts End, while continuing to provide an important non-motorised route through.

- 5.19 The inclusion of a planted buffer along the entirety of the western edge of the site will also minimise the visual impact of the proposal and provide physical separation between Piccotts End and Marchmont Farm. The design of this planted buffer should be informed by a Heritage Statement, having regard to the setting of Piccotts End Conservation Area, and Landscaping Visual Impact Assessment, both of which should be submitted in support of the planning application. This design should seek to provide a soft edge with a natural alignment and appearance that varies along this boundary but achieves an average planted depth of around 10 metres along its entirety.
- 5.20 The use of native species and mature vegetation will be key to the character of the development. The Landscaping scheme for the proposals will be drawn up in accordance with the landscaping aims and objectives set out in this Master Plan.

Infrastructure, Services and Utilities

Infrastructure, Services and Utilities Principles

- **Link to existing networks to provide access to local services and facilities.**
- **Provide extra capacity within existing local services where needed to serve the development.**
- **Co-ordinate the design of land drainage with the landscape and open space provisions within the site.**
- **Incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) measures where technically feasible.**
- **Work with Thames Water, and others if appropriate, to ensure sufficient sewerage and sewage treatment capacity exists prior to occupation of the development.**

- 5.21 A main objective of housing development in this location is that the additional people living in the area can become part of the community of Grovehill, and support the services that currently exist at Henry Wells Square. The need for new development to support existing retail and community facilities is essential in assisting the new development being socially integrated within the wider Grovehill neighbourhood.
- 5.22 Part of the requirement for the developers in providing homes at this site is to contribute financially towards existing education and community services in Grovehill.
- 5.23 Appropriate SuDS will be implemented within any new development where technically feasible. This will ensure that the drainage concept and design is considered at an early stage, allowing space to manage surface water, improve water quality and provide amenity space and enhance biodiversity value. Pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority, as well as Hertfordshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, are recommended to establish an appropriate surface water drainage strategy and SuDS design for the site.
- 5.24 This surface water drainage strategy and SuDS design should also be factored into a Flood Risk Assessment identifying areas at risk of flooding and appropriate mitigation to ensure the risk is minimised rather than exacerbated. Flood risk and surface water drainage will be considered in detail, including the implementation of appropriate SuDS measures where technically feasible, by the Local Planning Authority alongside the planning application for new homes. This will include statutory consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority (Hertfordshire Council) and the attachment of any relevant conditions to any planning permission granted.
- 5.25 Specifically with regard to this site, consideration should be given to the following aspects in relation to surface water management:
- Topography of the site;

- Enabling water to infiltrate across the site; and
- To safeguard the area at the foot of the hill for a potential overflow during extreme weather events.

Highways and Access

Highways and Access Principles

- **Plan good pedestrian access to Henry Wells Square and to key services, such as bus stops and community facilities.**
- **Plan good cycle access and connection to the rest of Grovehill, Piccotts End, and to key local services.**
- **Take the main vehicular access from East –West Link Road (A4147).**
- **Support offsite road junction improvements where appropriate.**
- **Plan secondary access points where the local highway authority consider feasible.**
- **Accommodate bus access if feasible.**

- 5.26 There must be good pedestrian and cycle links from Marchmont Farm into Grovehill in order to support the aims of social cohesion. An initial Transport Assessment has shown that vehicular access is not practical through to existing residential areas. The Highway Authority has confirmed it is sufficient to have one access from the Link Road into the site through the use of a new roundabout.
- 5.27 There is already good access from to the site to existing bus routes and stops, but there is a need for an additional bus stop to serve the new homes together with the need for the road within the site to accommodate full size buses in the future. Depending on the more detailed requirements for the location of the new bus stop, a pedestrian crossing may also be needed for the Link Road. Vehicular access along Piccotts End Lane and directly from Laidon Square have been discounted from the Master Plan
- 5.28 There should also be good pedestrian and cycle ways into existing residential areas, including Lomond Road, Laidon Square and Marlborough Rise. The footpath along Margaret Lloyd Park is currently well used but needs surfacing and lighting enhancement. This will enable greater use during night time, and cater for the additional use from occupants of the new homes. There are a number of other footpaths and access points around the perimeter of the site that can be connected to in order to achieve a good level of integration.
- 5.29 Piccotts End Lane will be retained as a footpath and cycleway, which is an excellent link between Grovehill and Piccotts End. The lane will inevitably need to be crossed by the new road within the site, and care should be taken to minimise the quantity of crossing points and to treat any crossings in an appropriate way for the level of movement expected. A more detailed transport assessment and

strategy will be required for these aspects and should be submitted with the planning application

6. Indicative Layout

- 6.1 The principles that are important to the success of the development are represented on the indicative layout plan below. The spatial principles are agreed and should be followed. However, there is some scope for the detailed design and internal road layout to be amended as part of a full planning application following conclusions from relevant technical studies.
- 6.2 The indicative layout plan has been established to address the development principles. These should be incorporated into the plans that are submitted for subsequent planning applications. Where details have not been established on the spatial layout, the planning application should appropriately address these, reflecting the development principles for the site. Such items will include the design of individual buildings and the surfacing of roads. Some matters will be subject to the policy guidance in place at the time.
- 6.3 Illustrative drawings of a typical block layout and a street view are shown following the indicative spatial layout. These are used to show visually the general density of the development, and how it might integrate with the style and composition of the rest of Grovehill. This will be subject to the planning application and the particular design of homes at that stage. The layout has been drawn up with primary and secondary frontages incorporated into the road layout. The solid red line along the main arterial road will be the primary frontage, which is used to define public and open spaces. Secondary frontages create a quieter street with more restricted views and give a greater perception of privacy and security. The typical block layout indicates what the development may look like, with the street view showing aspects of a secondary frontage, such as street trees and on street parking.

Supporting information:

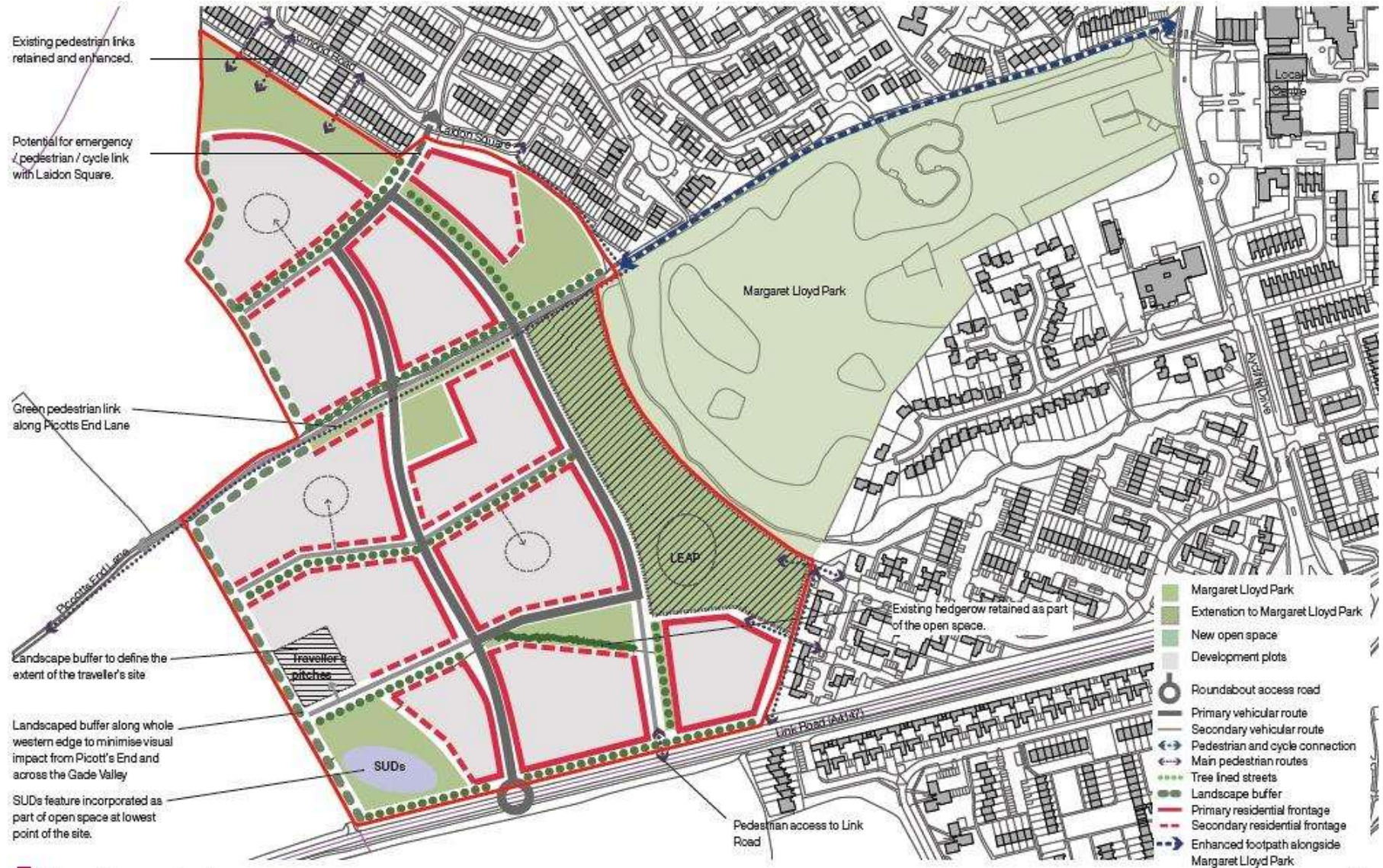
- 6.4 In addition to plans and drawings the following supporting studies will be required as part of the planning application process for reasons set out within this Master Plan. However, this is dependent on the validation requirements at the time of submission:
- Neighbourhood Notification Sheet
 - Planning Statement
 - Sustainability Statement
 - Energy Statement
 - Site Waste Management Plan
 - Tree Survey/Arboricultural Report
 - Environmental Impact Statement⁸
 - Transport Assessment
 - Archaeological Assessment
 - Updated Phase 1 Habitat Survey
 - Phase 2 Vegetation Survey

⁸ Subject to the conclusion of any Screening Opinion.

- Hedgerow Survey
- Protected Species Surveys and Assessments
- Land Contamination Assessment Phase 1 Report
- Lighting Assessment
- Open Space Assessment
- Design and Access Statement with Crime Prevention Measures
- Drainage Strategy
- Affordable Housing Statement
- Planning Obligations – Draft Heads of Terms
- Heritage Statement
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

6.5 Further advice relating to validation requirements, together with any specific requirements for this site, is available from the Council's Development Management team.

Figure 9: Indicative Spatial Layout



Typical Block Layout

Scale: 1:1000



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Marchmont Farm, Hemel Hempstead

Location plan for typical block layout



Indicative Spatial Layout

Typical Block Aerial View



**Street View
Secondary Street**

For location in masterplan see symbol on plan:



Marchmont Farm, Hemel Hempstead Masterplan Illustrations

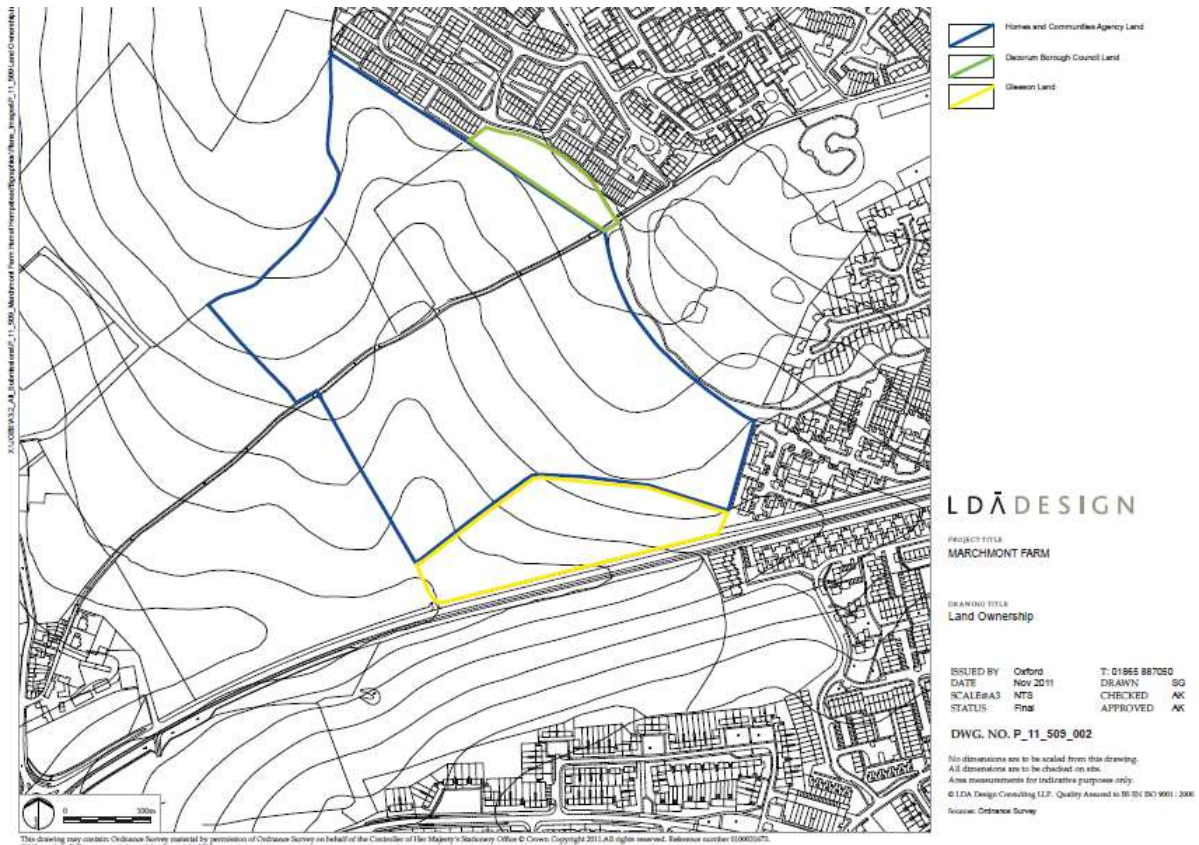
7. Delivery

7.1 This Master Plan will be used as a framework to help guide future development on the site. It elaborates on the requirements set out in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), which in turn forms part of the new Local Plan for Dacorum.

Site Ownership

7.2 The site is currently under the ownership of three parties: Gleeson Developments Ltd, the Homes and Communities Agency and Dacorum Borough Council. The extent of these ownerships is illustrated in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Land Ownership



Phasing

7.3 In accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS3: Managing Selected Development Sites and Site Allocation Policy LA1: Marchmont Farm, the site is scheduled to come forward for development in the second half of the Core Strategy period (i.e. after 2021). The first housing completions are expected within 15 months of the grant of outline consent or under a year from the grant of full planning permission. Hemel Hempstead is an active housing market area and it is anticipated that the development will take between four and five years to

complete. The development will be completed by 2031 to ensure its contribution to the Core Strategy housing target.

- 7.4 The primary access for both the development and construction traffic will be from the Link Road. The logical sequence of development phasing will therefore see the vehicular access in place when development commences and the land south of Piccotts End Lane developed first, followed by the land to the north of the lane.
- 7.5 Details of proposed phasing will be determined as part of the planning application. The Council will require that when a planning application or planning applications are brought forward for the allocation they demonstrate compliance with this Master Plan and a comprehensive approach to the development of the allocation, including the nature and timing of delivery of community infrastructure and other planning obligations.

Planning Obligations

- 7.6 There are no known or identified abnormal development costs which will undermine the ability of this site to pay appropriate contributions towards infrastructure either through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Section 106⁹, or a combination of both. The costs of providing a new junction on Link Road have been included in the viability assessment of the site carried out to inform the development of CIL. The main items identified to be funded as a result of the impact of the proposed development from either a Section 106 agreement or CIL include:
- *Affordable housing* - provision will be in accordance with the details in the Housing section of the development principles and the Council's Affordable Housing SPD. The individual composition of the tenure will be determined at the time of the application;
 - *Junction arrangements from the site onto Link Road* – this is expected to be in the form of a roundabout. Precise configuration to be determined following advice from the Highway Authority at the planning application stage.
 - *Other local junction improvements* – as advised by the Highway Authority;
 - *Contributions towards sustainable transport* – as advised by the Passenger Transport unit at the County Council;
 - *Improvements to the footpath and lighting along Margaret Lloyd Park* – to improve safety and security of links from the site to the facilities at Henry Wells Square;

⁹ The Council's CIL charging regime was adopted in February 2015 and implemented on 1st July 2015. In the event of any changes to legislation, Section 106 agreements will be used to secure funding for infrastructure requirements.

- *Education contributions* - for local primary school provision and other educational needs;
- *Healthcare contributions* – for local services as advised by NHS Hertfordshire; and
- *Contribution towards improved community facilities at Henry Wells Square* - to help mitigate the impact of an increased local population on the existing neighbourhood centre in Grovehill and improve local facilities.
- *Social and community infrastructure contributions* – including the provision of a Locally Equipped Play Area (LEAP) on the site and contributions toward other facilities where a need is identified.

8. Supporting documents

8.1 The following background documents have helped with the preparation of the Master Plan:

- Report on LA1 Workshop, Feria Urbanism (July 2013);
- Dacorum Borough Council Community Infrastructure Levy: Viability Study, DBC (July 2013);
- Dacorum Borough Council Community Infrastructure Levy: Strategic Sites Testing, BNP Paribas (October 2013);
- Desk Based Archaeological Assessment for LA1, CgMs (October 2004);
- Archaeological Trial Trench Report for LA1, CgMs (August 2013);
- Geophysical Survey Report for Dacorum Area, Stratascan (June 2013);
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey, LDA Design (October 2004);
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey Update, LDA Design (July 2012);
- Landscape Visual Assessment, LDA Design (November 2004, update June 2012);
- Landscape Character Assessment SPG, DBC (May 2004);
- Issues and Options Neighbourhood Plan, Grovehill Futures (September 2014);
- Transport Strategy, Vectos for Gleeson Developments Ltd (November 2014);
- Hemel Hempstead Transport Model Update, (July 2015);
- Grovehill Future Draft Neighbourhood Plan;
- Hertfordshire's Ecological Networks: A report on the current situation and priorities for restoration, Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership (2013).

8.2 The documents can be viewed on Dacorum Borough Council's website:

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/local-planning-framework/site-allocations/localallocations/la1-marchmont-farm-hemel-hempstead>